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UNCLAS TAIPEI 000859

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/RSP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD -
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

1. Summary: Four major Chinese-language dailies and two limited-circulation English-language newspapers in Taiwan reported March 2 on the "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for the Year 2004," which was released by the State Department Monday. These reports, all straight news coverage carried on the inside pages of the newspapers, said the State Department report generally praises the state of human rights in Taiwan but points out a number of problem areas such as detainees abused by the police, corruption by officials, violence and discrimination toward women, child prostitution and abuse, and narcotic use by women and children.

2. The "United Daily News," a major pro-unification daily in Taiwan, pointed out that in the State Department's Human Rights Report, Taiwan is categorized under China, but was separated from Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macao. It also noted that the Human Rights Report commented on Taiwan's news reporting as "erratic," due to the fact that the media often violates privacy and operates based on government advertisements and government loans. The centrist "China Times," however, focused on the fact that the Human Rights Report described in detail the pre-election shooting incident on March 19 and its influence on Taiwan's 2004 presidential election. Three newspapers' reports were based on the Central News Agency's story sent from Washington. Headlines of these reports followed.

A) "U.S. State Department Human Rights Report: Many of Taiwan's Media [Organizations] Live on Government Loans; Quality of [Taiwan's] News Reporting Erratic; [Human Rights] Report Also Said Taiwan Government Denies That It Manipulates the Media" (P.10, by Washington correspondent Vincent Chang, [conservative, pro-unification] United Daily News [circulation: 600,000], 3/2/05)

B) "United States' 2004 Human Rights Report Describes in Details Controversies of Taiwan's Presidential Election" (P.11, by Washington correspondent Liu Ping, [centrist, pro-status quo] China Times [circulation: 600,000], 3/2/05)

C) "Taiwan's Human Rights [Condition] Wins International Approval; U.S. State Department Report Praises Taiwan's Freedom of Speech But Points out Flaws in Judicial [System]" (P.7, Central News Agency Washington dispatch, [pro-independence] Taiwan Daily [circulation: 150,000], 3/2/05)

D) "U.S. Report: Politics Interfered with Taiwan's Media" (P.7, [tabloid] Apple Daily [circulation: 500,000], 3/2/05)

E) "Human Rights Need Work: US" (P.2, by Washington correspondent Charles Snyder, [pro-independence, English-language] Taipei Times [circulation: 30,000], 3/2/05)

F) "U.S. Report Positive on Rights in Taiwan" (P.19, Central News Agency Washington dispatch, [conservative, pro-unification, English-language] China Post [circulation: 30,000], 3/2/05)

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